

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

ANQA-2025/114

DECISION No. 114

March 1, 2025

**ON ACCREDITATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES OF
M. NALBANDYAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF SHIRAK FOUNDATION**

General Information about the Institution

Full name of the Institution: “M. Nalbandyan State University of Shirak”
Foundation

Official Address: 4 Paruyr Sevak St., Gyumri, Shirak Region, RA

Previous Accreditation **Conditional institutional accreditation for a period of**
decision and date: **two years, Decision No. 72 of September 15, 2022**

Guided by the Statute on State Accreditation of Tertiary Level Institutions and their Academic Programmes approved by the RA Government Decree N 978-N as of June 30, 2011, the RA Government Decree N 959-N as of June 30, 2011 on the Approval of Accreditation Criteria for Tertiary Education of RA, the Procedure on the Formation and Operation of the Accreditation Committee of the “National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation (hereinafter referred to as “ANQA”) as well as by the Regulation on the Formation of ANQA’s Expert Panel, ANQA’s Accreditation Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) discussed the issue on accreditation of institutional capacities of the M. Nalbandyan State University of Shirak (hereinafter referred to as “SUSH”, “TLI”) in the session of the Accreditation Committee held on March 1, 2025.

The main phases of the accreditation process were carried out within the following periods:

Submission of application: October 16, 2023

Submission of the revised self-evaluation: March 21, 2024

Site visit by the expert panel: May 27-30, 2024

Submission of the expert panel report: August 15, 2024

Submission of the preliminary follow-up plan September 26, 2024

The external review of the SUSH's institutional capacities was carried out by the following expert panel:

- **Armen Harutyunyan**, vice rector for development at the Yerevan State Theatre and Film Institute, chair of the expert panel.
- **Samvel Karabekyan**, chief adviser to the rector at the Armenian State University of Economics.
- **Narine Sirakanyan**, project manager at the National Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia.
- **Mieczyslaw Socha**, Professor at Warsaw University and School of Public Administration.
- **Arpine Hakobyan**, student at the Department English Language and Literature of the Vanadzor State University, student expert.

The evaluation was conducted according to the 10 criteria of institutional accreditation approved by the RA Government Decree N 959 as of June 30, 2011. Evaluation according to accreditation criteria:

Evaluation	Conclusion
1. Mission and Purpose	Satisfactory
2. Governance and Administration	Unsatisfactory
3. Academic Programmes	Satisfactory
4. Students	Satisfactory
5. Faculty and Staff	Satisfactory
6. Research and Development	Satisfactory
7. Infrastructure and Resources	Satisfactory
8. Societal Responsibility	Satisfactory
9. External Relations and Internationalization	Satisfactory
10. Internal Quality Assurance System	Satisfactory

Having examined the SUSH's self-evaluation of institutional capacities, the expert panel report, the follow-up plan; having heard the conclusions on the expert panel evaluation, which were made by the two members selected by the Chair of the Accreditation Committee and were formed as a result of the meetings with the expert panel members and the SUSH's representatives; as well the comments and suggestions made by the Accreditation Committee members, the Committee stated the following:

1. The SUSH ensures the credible award of qualifications.

The SUSH's academic programmes (APs) comply with the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the institution's mission, while the strategy for their continuous enhancement generally ensures the credible award of qualifications. The AP benchmarking has been conducted against those of Armenian and international institutions. The APs include a limited number of elective courses. The alignment between learning outcomes and assessment requires further clarification.

The academic staff comprises specialists holding academic degrees and titles alongside young specialists and employers. The institution conducts teachers' capacity-building activities. Teachers are involved in scientific research projects, thereby ensuring the integration of research and learning. However, academic staff are not recruited through a competitive selection process, and one-year employment contracts are concluded, which poses a risk to staff stability.

The SUSH's resources support the AP implementation, providing an appropriate learning environment for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. However, the available equipment requires further upgrading to keep pace with the latest requirements of the labour market.

2. Strategic management and the QA system are still in the stage of formation. However, there are development trends and governance is aimed at quality enhancement and credible award of qualifications.

The governance system is still under development. However, progress is evident. The SUSH follows its strategic plan and reports to its stakeholders.

Decision-making largely relies on descriptive reporting rather than data-driven analysis, limiting the development of evidence-based policies.

The SUSH places significant emphasis on the development of its QA system and implements enhancement-driven measures. However, as part of the PDCA (Plan–Do–Check–Act) cycle, the planning and implementation stages are currently more established, while the evaluation and improvement mechanisms still require further enhancement.

3. Internationalisation and research activities have development trends and support the credible award of qualifications.

The SUSH has defined priorities for research and creative activities and encourages the participation of teachers and students in research projects.

The SUSH is strengthening its international partnerships and mobility programmes, while also expanding external relations.

5. The preliminary follow-up plan in the expert panel report is generally realistic and does not contain any risks. The implementation will lead to qualitative enhancements.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned, as a result of an open voting, the Accreditation Committee:

DECIDED

1. **To award institutional accreditation to the “M. Nalbandyan State University of Shirak” Foundation for 4 /four/ years.**
2. After the publication of the decision on accreditation award, to submit a revised follow-up plan based on the expert panel report and respective time schedule to ANQA within two months, taking into account the need to give urgent solution to the existing problems.
3. To pay special attention to:
 - a) the enhancement of the governance system, with an emphasis on institutional autonomy and the academic staff's results-oriented initiatives, while maintaining balanced cooperation between the Board of Trustees and the Rectorate;
 - b) the reduction of risks to the stability and long-term development of the academic staff;

- c) the expansion of opportunities for the teachers' capacity building, based on their needs assessment, with relevant financial resources allocated and clearly defined schedule;
 - d) the use of reliable, KPI-based data to inform decision-making and ensure accountability;
 - e) the establishment of regular evaluation and enhancement of APs as a key component of the QA system;
 - f) the implementation of regular monitoring of APs in line with the self-audit schedule.
4. In accordance with the requirements set by point 12 of the Statute on State Accreditation of Tertiary Level Institutions and their Academic Programmes, every 2 /two/ years to submit a written report to the ANQA on the results of carried out activities by ensuring the evaluation of enhancement of the TLI's activity, innovations and achievements.
5. To assign the ANQA to carry out mandatory monitoring of the effectiveness of the TLI's activities in accordance with the KPIs.

Chair of the Accreditation Committee:

V. Gabrielyan

March 1, 2025

Yerevan